

The Random Jottings of Donald Jay from Nelson in Pendle.

## Anne Mort

The small village of Astley was known for its picturesque canals that wound their way through the tranquil countryside. The locals would often take leisurely strolls along the water's edge, enjoying the serenity that the canals provided. However, there was one specter that haunted the area, a ghostly figure known as Anne Mort.

Legend had it that Anne Mort was a young woman who had lived in Astley many years ago. She was said to be a beauty with flowing chestnut hair and sparkling blue eyes. Anne had captured the hearts of many suitors in the village, but she only had eyes for one man, Thomas Kingsley. Thomas was a dashing young gentleman who had recently returned from a long journey overseas. Anne and Thomas had fallen deeply in love, their hearts entwined like the ivy that adorned the old village church. They spent their days walking hand in hand along the canals, dreaming of a future together.

However, their love story took a tragic turn when Thomas received news that he was to inherit a vast fortune from a distant relative. Tempted by the promise of wealth and adventure, Thomas made the decision to leave Astley behind and seek his fortune elsewhere. He promised Anne that he would return for her one day, but his departure left her heartbroken.

Days turned into weeks, weeks turned into months, and still, there was no sign of Thomas.

Anne's heart grew heavy with grief, and as the seasons changed, her health began to decline. She would often be seen wandering along the canals, her ethereal figure draped in a flowing grey gown, her face pale and haunting.

The villagers believed that Anne had died of a broken heart, her love for Thomas consuming her until there was nothing left. It was said that her spirit could not rest, forever condemned to roam the canals in search of her lost love.

Locals and visitors alike spoke of encountering the ghostly figure of Anne Mort. Some claimed to have seen her walking silently by the canal waters, her sad eyes fixed on the horizon. Others reported hearing whispers carried by the wind, a mournful melody that spoke of unrequited love. The haunting manifestation of Anne Mort became part of Astley's folklore, a cautionary tale of the power of love and the consequences of forsaking it. The villagers would gather by the canals on moonlit nights, sharing stories of their encounters with the grey lady. They offered prayers and flowers, hoping to bring peace to her tormented soul.

Generations passed, and the legend of Anne Mort continued to captivate the villagers of Astley. Each year, on the anniversary of her death, the canal banks would be adorned with bouquets of blue forget-me-nots, a symbol of undying love. The villagers believed that the gesture would help ease Anne's sorrow and allow her to find solace in the afterlife.

And so, Anne Mort's presence lingered in the hearts and minds of the people of Astley, a poignant reminder that love, once forsaken, could never truly be forgotten. Her ghostly figure would forever roam the canals, a symbol of love lost and a testament to the power of a broken heart.

By Donald Jay